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Passionate Advocate

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Laura McNally-Levine[†]

PASSIONATE ADVOCATE

Passionate Advocate: The definition of Judith P. Lipton's career here at Case Western Reserve University School of Law. No matter the case, project, or issue, Judy was always a passionate advocate who you wanted on your side. During her thirty-six-year tenure here, she tirelessly advocated on behalf of students, staff, and faculty at the law school and across campus, as well as on behalf of the Milton A. Kramer Law Clinic Center's clients. She served as Co-Director of the Milton A. Kramer Law Clinic Center, became our first Chaired Clinic Professor when she became the Honorable Blanche E. Krupansky and Frank W. Vargo, Jr. Professor of Law, and also held the position of Associate Dean for Experiential Education.

We want our students to learn how to become passionate advocates for their clients. And a part of my lesson plan would include Judy as Exhibit A. As a result of a multi-decade career at one law firm, one thing is guaranteed: clients will always know where to find you when they need you. If Judy could not help them because they had a civil or health-law issue and she was teaching in the Criminal Justice Clinic, she would come down the hall and knock on my door. The next thing I knew is that I would have a new case!

Over the years, Judy and I represented many of the same clients, we worked together through the legal and non-legal issues our clients were facing, and had each other's backs when we were fighting uphill battles to get services and support for clients who could not navigate the legal system alone. To maintain one's luster as an advocate, you have to have a support system. Judy maintained that system by a pattern of door-to-door visits and, if the weather was right, a "Judy walk." I will miss those walks.

Judy has often sung others' praises regarding the creation and success of our experiential education program, but we would not be leading the way in experiential education without her passionate advocacy. First and foremost, Judy believed in experiential education as an important component of a well-rounded law-school curriculum. She dedicated her career to expanding opportunities for our students so that they could explore what it means to be a real lawyer even before they graduate from law school. In 2011, when the law school faculty reformed the curriculum and mandated twelve experiential education credits for graduation, Judy led the way in creating our capstone program. Under her leadership as Associate Dean for Experiential

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Education, every student spent a full semester in practice prior to graduation, with student placements in Cleveland and around the world.

Judy also created the first-year client experience curriculum, which provides each first-year student the opportunity to work with community members in need. These first-year experiences immediately engage students in the practice of law, energizing their studies in foundational courses and instilling the importance of pro bono work as they see, for example, the fall-out from inadequate social services or poorly drafted contracts.

Lastly, but by far not least, Judy is a passionate advocate for her family. This might seem like an odd point to make in a tribute to her career at the Law School but it is not. Judy led by example and showed generations of law students and colleagues a way to balance work and family obligations. By letting us see her humanity, she modeled ways for us to live full lives.

We were not ready for Judy to retire. But she has more than earned it. And so we wish her all the best in whatever activities to which she devotes her incredible talents. And if you ever want take a “Judy walk,” just give me a call!